**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of signficance and applicable criteria)

Statement of Significance

The Greenwood-Columbia Railroad Depot in Ninety Six, S.C. is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion E on the basis of its significance as a structure associated with the railroad transportation industry, and under criterion F as an excellent intact example of a typical small – town passenger station of the early twentieth century. Built in 1852, the depot was literally the keystone of Ninety Six, the most successful of the several towns that arose along the Norfolk Southern Railway (0riginally Southern Railroad) formally the Greenville-Columbia Railroad.

Its is thus locally significant for the prominent role it played in the town's early history and commercial development, and as a tangible reminder of that period which retains its historic architectural integrity and has undergone no significant alterations since its construction.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

By December, 1853 the Greenville-Columbia line was completed to Greenville, with branches to Abbeville and Anderson, a total of 164 miles. It was an eight year struggle from the date of incorporation in 1845 to the time the last spike was driven. Under the leadership of Judge John Belton O'Neall (elected president in May 1847) the road became a reality. But even though O"Neall was a man of great leadership and administrative ability, the task by no means was easy. He had to deal with the controversy over the route between Newberry and Greenville, the line suffered two damaging floods in three years. The second one, in the late summer of 1852, put out of commission 30 miles of track that was estimated to cost as much as $50,000 to repair.

The Greenville-Columbia Railroad revolutionized public transportation in the County and in upper South Carolina. It brought an all-weather transportation system that was more dependable and much faster than the wagons, stages and river barges it eventually replaced. Columbia via rail became only five hours from Greenwood instead of two days; It also brought more frequent mail service to an area where delivery to some post offices had been only once a week. The Greenville-Columbia, Ninety Six Depot served as a mid point for the delivery of these services.

In 1852, when the Greenville & Columbia Railroad began serving the present Greenwood County area, population was sparse. The new Ninety Six Depot was in the process of being established and the only places recognizable were Cambridge (Old Ninety Six), Cokesbury, and Greenwood, Which by present day comparisons were mere villages. Except for a few merchants, blacksmiths, and professionals, most of the County's adult male citizens were farmers.

During the Reconstruction Period (1865-1877), cotton farming continued to dominate the economy while the county experienced little growth (in 1860, the Towns of Greenwood County population were estimated to be slightly more than 300: in 1870, 700: and in 1880, 745). The Greenville & Columbia Railroad route was the most effective means of passenger travel and shipping and receiving goods. Cotton was shipped in great quantity because none of the production was used in the county and very little in the state. In 1869, South Carolina used only 4.8% of the cotton harvested at home and only 5.5% six years later. Freight delivered to the county's merchants consisted mostly of staple and manufactured goods. With the establishment of Greenwood Cotton Mill in 1890, the economic base of the County began to change toward manufacturing, but two decades would pass before it overtook Agriculture. When Greenwood County Cotton Mills began operations the Town of Ninety Six population almost tripled during the next 15 years.

By 1912, there were Six (6) textile mills in Greenwood County and the "First Line" by then the Southern Railway, served four Greenwood cotton Mills, Ninety Six Cotton Mill, Panola Cotton Mill and Grendel Cotton Mill Number 2. In addition, it indirectly served Ware Shoals Manufacturing Company through a connection at Shoals Junction with the Ware Shoals Railroad. The "First Line" served many industries and businesses since Greenwood County was created. Some of those known, including the textile plants heretofore mentioned, are listed below: